

Virginia Emergency Operations Center (VEOC)  
Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)  
Virginia Emergency Response Team (VERT)  
**WISE COUNTY/TOWN OF BIG STONE GAP WATER SHORTAGE**  
**SITUATION REPORT # 17**  
**1300 Hours October 24, 2005**

***New Information in Bold Italics***

***Next Conference Call is scheduled for Wednesday, October 26, 2005, 0930 hours***  
***Information for Situation Report should be submitted to the VEOC no later than 1000 hours daily***

**WEATHER**

**Forecast:**

***Southwest VA:** Mostly cloudy with 30% chance of showers. High temperatures in the lower to mid 40's falling in afternoon, West winds 10–15 MPH. Tonight Partly cloudy with a 50% chance of precipitation, chance of Snow above 3,000 feet. High temperatures in the mid-upper 40's, West winds 5-15 MPH.*  
***NWS Morristown has posted the Latest Hydrologic Outlook Statement on their home page - <http://www.srh.noaa.gov/data/MRX/ESFMRX>, Big Cherry Dam rainfall gage indicates 0.16 inches of rain fell during 24 Hr period ending 0800 October 24.***  
***River flow gauges show an increase level of water flow over the past week. The continued loss of foliage will help increase the flow rate.***  
***VEOC analysis of projected paths of Hurricane Wilma and Tropical Storm Alpha indicate no significant contribution to drought relief.***

**EXECUTIVE ACTION**

**EOC Activation:**

The Virginia VEOC is at Increased Readiness condition and augmented with limited staffing.

**State of Emergency:**

On October 7, 2005, Governor Mark R. Warner declared a state of emergency to exist for Wise County and the Town of Big Stone Gap to assist these localities in responding to a critical water shortage. Governor Warner directed appropriate assistance be rendered by agencies of the state government to respond to needs in Wise County and the Town of Big Stone Gap to alleviate adverse conditions created by the water shortage.

Executive Order 99 (2005) has been amended to impose an Open Burning Ban on Wise County and the Town of Big Stone Gap, effective immediately and continuing until such time as local officials advise the Governor it should be lifted.

**Local Situation:**

**Local Emergency Declared:** Wise County declared a local emergency on September 26, 2005.

**STATE AGENCIES**

**Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM)**

A VDEM Hazardous Materials Officer is coordinating with Wise County, the Town of Big Stone Gap, and state/local agencies to identify needed resources and continue logistical support. ***Transfer to new coordinator for water operations supplied by Wise County is underway.*** The new Region Four Coordinator will meet with local personal during the later part of this week. A VDEM Reservist is on site at the Wise County Command Post to assist with logistics and finance.

The VEOC is coordinating requests for assistance from the locality and state agencies and compiling a list of available resources.

The VEOC is facilitating conference calls with the locality and state agencies.

**Virginia Department of Health (VDH)**

***Dr. Sue Cantrell, will be the State point of contact through the end of this week. Water use has increased proportionate to an increased patient load at the***

**hospital. Gastrointestinal illnesses are being closely monitored for any outbreaks. Currently no abnormalities have been detected. VDACS is using the same standards and guidelines as VDH - ODW (Office of Drinking Water) for food operations during water outages/shortage.**

**Virginia National Guard (VNG)**

The VNG continues distribution and blivet support mission. Eleven blivets are placed at the following locations: one at each of the three public schools, one at the Hospital, one at the Nursing Home, one serving the community college/DMME, one at the Special Needs Shelter, two supporting the Portable Water Processing Plants, and two supporting the Powell River Cave #1 pumping operation. **Weather protection equipment for employees and or personnel is being considered.** Fifteen soldiers remain on mission.

**No longer conducting bottled water distribution.**

**Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)**

Monitoring Powell River water flow.

**Virginia Department of Corrections (VDOC)**

The VDOC is refilling blivets daily.

**Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT)**

VDOT has 4 message boards in the Big Stone Gap area.

A VDOT tractor is being used to pull stainless steel tankers of water.

**Department of General Services/Consolidated Labs**

Testing of the Clinch Haven Farm well was conducted and results relayed to the VDH and Town of Big Stone Gap.

**Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF)**

The VDOF has signs in place notifying residents of the burn ban.

**Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy (DMME)**

**DMME Geologist advised officials they are pumping water from the Powell River Cave #1 not the Hairy Hole Cave. Hairy Hole Cave is a separate cave and no longer considered a viable source for water. Powell River Cave #1 receives 90-95% of its water from the Powell River and once the reservoir is empty the cave will dry up.**

**LOCAL ACTIVITIES**

**Local, county and state personnel met during the weekend.**

**Town of Big Stone Gap is trying to locate a pump for the main line to recover and return unused water to treatment plant for conservation purposes.**

**One to three million gallons of water is currently at the reservoir. Without any additional rainfall the reservoir will likely shutdown as a source of water.**

Test results on the Town of Appalachia connection are expected by Monday, October 24. This resource will be brought into use at such time as the reservoir's supply is completely depleted. **In addition, testing of Appalachia back up wells, which are being reconnected to that water system, is underway. Five additional potential sources of water have been identified.**

A boil water notice remains in effect pending water sample test results that were collected October 21 and are due today.

The Cracker Neck area, which is east of Big Stone Gap, is of concern. A pump is on order to deliver water into the system and will arrive on Friday, October 28, 2005. Interim measures are being contemplated.

**Monitoring water usage for some businesses and residents is underway.**

**Conservation efforts continue as recommended.**

Permanent connection is complete from the Norton/ Big Stone Gap water line. The system is providing 100,000 gallon per day and **efforts to increase the flow is**

***underway. Powell River Cave #1 continues pumping water during 7:00am – 3:00am allowing the down time to recharge of the Cave supplies. Second filtration plant is online with potential output of 500,000 and operating at 50% capacity.***

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